



Beauly to Blackhillock to New Deer to Peterhead 400 kV OHL Project Environmental Impact Assessment Report

Contents, Abbreviations and Preface

September 2025

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ABBREVIATIONS AND GLOSSARY

Abbreviation	Definition
AADF	Annual Average Daily Flows
AADT	Average Annual Daily Traffic
ABSTs	Advanced Bat Survey Techniques
AC	Aberdeenshire Council
ACAS	Aberdeenshire Council Archaeology Service
AH	Ash
AIL	Abnormal Indivisible Load
AILV	Abnormal Indivisible Load Vehicle
ALAN	Artificial Light at Night
Alignment	A centre line of an overhead line, along with location of key angle structures.
Alignment (preferred)	An alignment for the overhead line taken forward to stakeholder consultation following a comparative appraisal of alignment options
Alignment (proposed)	An alignment taken forward to consent application. It comprises a defined centre line for the overhead line and includes an indicative support structure (tower or pole) schedule, also specifying access arrangements and any associated construction facilities.
ALRA	Abnormal Load Route Assessment
Annex I (as listed on the EC Habitats Directive)	Annex I to the EC Habitats Directive lists the types of habitats and the animal and plant species whose conservation requires the designation of special areas of conservation. Some are defined as 'priority' habitats or species in danger of disappearing and for which there are specific rules.
AONB	Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty
ASNO	Ancient Semi-Natural Origin
ASTI	Accelerated Strategic Transmission Investment
ATC	Automatic Traffic Counters
ATV	All-Terrain Vehicle
AWI	Ancient Woodland Inventory. A database of land that is currently wooded and has been continually wooded, at least since 1750.
BAP	Biodiversity Action Plan
BCH	Beech
BCT	Bat Conservation Trust
BESS	Battery Energy Storage Systems
BGN	Background Noise Levels
BGS	British Geological Survey
BirdLife International	A global partnership of non-governmental organizations that strives to conserve birds and their habitats.
BL	Broadleaves
BNG	Biodiversity Net Gain is a process which leaves nature in a better state than it started
BoCC	Birds of Conservation Concern provides the status of all regularly occurring birds in the UK, Channel Islands and Isle of Man. The current version is BoCC 5. Birds of highest conservation concern will appear on the Red List.
BTO	British Trust for Ornithology
CAR	Controlled Activities Regulations also known as The Water Environment (Controlled Activities) (Scotland) Regulations 2011 (and amendments), apply regulatory control over activities which may affect Scotland's water environment.
CAR	Common alder
CAT	Cable avoidance technology
CDM	Construction Design and Management

Abbreviation	Definition
CEMP	Construction Environmental Management Plan
CIEEM	Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management
ClfA	Chartered Institute for Archaeologists
CNIA	Construction Noise Impact Assessment
CNMP	Construction Noise Management Plan
COPA	The Control of Pollution Act, 1974
Corridor	A linear area which allows a continuous connection between the defined connection points. The corridor may vary in width along its length; in unconstrained areas it may be many kilometres wide.
CoWRP	Scottish Government's Control of Woodland Removal Policy
CP	Compensatory Planting
CPM	Carbon and Peatland 2016 map
CRoW	Catalogue of Rights of Way
CRS	Carbon Rich Soils
CSE	Cable Sealing End compounds are required to facilitate transition from underground cable to overhead line (and vice versa).
CTMP	Construction Traffic Management Plan
CVIA	Construction Vibration Impact Assessment
CVMP	Construction Vibration Management Plan
CWID	Carriageway width between white line markings
dB	Decibel, a measure of sound level
DBI	Downy birch
DBW	Daytime Bat Walkover
Designated Sites Study Area	Area within 20 km of ornithological designated sites.
DF	Douglas Fir
DfT	Department of Transport
DIA	Drainage Impact Assessment
DMRB	Design Manual for Roads and Bridges
DSM	Digital Surface Model
DTM	Digital Terrain Model
DWPA	Drinking Water Protected Area
EC	European Commission
EcIA	Ecological Impact Assessment
EnvCoW	Environmental Clerk of Works
ECU	Scottish Government Energy Consents Unit
EIA	Environmental Impact Assessment. A formal process set down in The Electricity Works (Environmental Impact Assessment) (Scotland) Regulations 2017 used to systematically identify, predict and assess the likely significant environmental impacts of a proposed project or development.
EIA Report	Environmental Impact Assessment Report
EMF	Electric and Magnetic Field
EPS	European Protected Species
EPZs	Equipotential Zones
ESQCR	Electricity Safety, Quality and Continuity Regulations
EZol	Ecological Zone of Influence
FAS	Flood Alleviation Scheme
FISA	Forest Industry Safety Accord
FLS	Forestry and Land Scotland

Abbreviation	Definition
Focal Areas	Areas of interest within the ornithological survey programme
FRA	Flood Risk Assessment
FWPM	Freshwater Pearl Mussel. It is an endangered species of mollusc, found in clean, nutrient poor low-calcium rivers.
GB	Great Britain
GCN	Great Crested Newt
GCR	Geological Conservation Review
GDL	Gardens and Designed Landscapes, as listed on the Inventory of Gardens and Designed Landscapes held by Historic Environment Scotland
GEMP	General Environmental Management Plan
GI	Ground Investigation
GIS	Geographic Information System
GLTA	Ground Level Tree Assessment
GLVIA 3	Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment, 3rd Edition (2013)
GPR	Ground-Penetrating Radar
GWDTE	Groundwater Dependent Terrestrial Ecosystems
GWL	Grey/Goat willow
ha	hectares
HABMOS	Habitat Map of Scotland
HAW	Hawthorn
HAZ	Hazel
HCHET	Highland Council Historic Environment Team
HER	Historic Environment Record
HES	Historic Environment Scotland
HGV	Heavy Goods Vehicle
HLCM	Scotland Habitat and Land Cover Map 2020
HMP	Habitat Management Plan
HNBP	Highland Nature Biodiversity Action Plan
HND	Holistic Network Design
HRA	Habitats Regulations Appraisal must be carried out by the 'competent authority' if a plan or project (either alone or in combination with other plans or projects) could affect a European designated site. The Applicant is required to submit scientific evidence to enable the competent authority to complete the HRA and this evidence is typically submitted in the form of a 'Shadow HRA'.
HRSG	Highland Raptor Study Group
HSI	Habitat Suitability Index
IBA	Important Bird Areas
IEF	Important Ecological Features
IEMA	Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment ¹
IIA	Important Invertebrate Area
ILP	Institute of Lighting Professionals
ILX	Holly
INNS	Invasive Non-Native Species
IOA	Institute of Acoustics
IOF	Important Ornithological Features

¹ The Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment (IEMA) was officially rebranded on 17 July 2025, and is now known as the Institute of Sustainability and Environmental Professionals. For the purposes of this EIA Report, the Institute will continue to be referred to as IEMA throughout.

Abbreviation	Definition
ISO	International Organization for Standardization
IUCN	International Union for Conservation of Nature
JNCC	Joint Nature Conservation Committee
km	kilometer
kV	kilovolt
L	Larch
LBAP	Local Biodiversity Action Plan
LCT	Landscape Character Type
LEPO	Long-Established woodlands of Plantation Origin
LGS	Local Geodiversity Site
LMP	Land Management Plan
LNCS	Local Nature Conservation Sites
LNR	Local Nature Reserve
LOAEL	Lowest observable adverse effect level
LoD	Limit of Deviation. The area either side of the proposed alignment and ancillary works within which micro-siting may take place in accordance with the conditions of the Section 37 consent.
LP	Lodgepole pine
LPA	Local Planning Authority
LSE	Likely Significant Effect
LTFP	Long Term Forest Plans
LU	Landscape Unit
LVIA	Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment. A chapter within the EIA Report to systematically identify, predict, assess and report on the likely significant landscape and visual impacts of a proposed project or development.
m	metre
MB	Mixed broadleaves
MC	Moray Council
MCA	Multi-Criteria Analysis
MD-SEDD	Marine Directorate - Science Evidence Data and Digital
MPA	Marine Protection Areas
National Grid	The electricity transmission network in Great Britain.
NBL	Native broadleaves
NBW	Night-time Bat Walkover
NCN	National Cycle Network
NCR	National Cycle Route
NERSG	North East Raptor Study Group
NESBiP	North East Scotland Biodiversity Partnership
NGET	National Grid Electricity Transmission
NHZ	Natural Heritage Zones
NMU	Non-motorised Use
NNR	National Nature Reserve
NOA	Network Options Assessment
NPF4	National Planning Framework 4
NR	Noise Rating
NRTF	National Road Traffic Forecasts
NS	Norway spruce

Abbreviation	Definition
NSA	National Scenic Area. A national level designation applied to those landscapes considered to be of exceptional scenic value
NSR	Noise sensitive receptors
NTS	Non-Technical Summary
NVC	National Vegetation Classification
NWSS	Native Woodland Survey of Scotland
OAMP	Outdoor Access Management Plan
OC	Operational Corridor
OHL	Overhead Line. An electric line installed above ground, usually supported by lattice steel towers or wooden poles
OIA	Ornithological Impact Assessment
OPGW	Optical Ground Wire
OS	Ordnance Survey
OSMM	Ordnance Survey MasterMap
OTMP	Operational Traffic Management Plan
PAN	Planning Advice Note
PAWS	Plantations on Ancient Woodland Sites
PCH	Potential Collision Height (Risk of bird strike with overhead lines)
PHV	Percentage of Heavy Vehicles
PIA	Personal Injury Accident
PLHRA	Peat landslide hazard and risk assessment
PoWRA	Point of Work Risk Assessment
PMP	Peat Management Plan
PPE	Personal Protective Equipment
PPIP	Individual Pollution Prevention and Incident plan
PPV	Peak Particle Velocity
PRA	Preliminary Roost Assessment
PRC	Potential Risk of Collision
PRF	Potential Roost Feature
PRI	Public Road Improvements
PRoW	Public Rights of Way
PWS	Private Water Supply
PWSMP	Private Water Supply Monitoring Plan
PWSRA	Private Water Supply Risk Assessment
Ramsar	A wetland site designated to be of international importance under the Ramsar Convention.
RDF	The Roy Dennis Foundation
Red List	Species on the 'Red List' of Bird of Conservation Concern 2021 (Stanbury et al, 2021)
RGI	Renewable Grid Incentive
Route (preferred)	A route for the overhead line taken forward to stakeholder consultation following a comparative appraisal of route options.
Route (proposed)	A route taken forward following stakeholder consultation to the alignment selection stage of the overhead line routeing process.
Routeing	The work undertaken which leads to the selection of a proposed alignment, capable of being taken forward into the consenting process under Section 37 of the Electricity Act 1989
ROW	Rowan
RSPB Scotland	Royal Society for the Protection of Birds Scotland

Abbreviation	Definition
RVAA	Residential Visual Amenity Assessment
SAC	Special Areas of Conservation. An area designated under the EC Habitats Directive to ensure that rare, endangered or vulnerable habitats or species of community interest are either maintained at or restored to a favourable conservation status
SAM	Scheduled Ancient Monuments
SBI	Silver birch
SBL	Scottish Biodiversity List
SBS	Scottish Biodiversity Strategy
Section 37	An application for development consent under Section 37 of the Electricity Act 1989
Sensitive Receptors	Factors of the natural and built environment, including people and communities, that may be affected by the Proposed Development
SEPA	Scottish Environment Protection Agency
SHET	Scottish Hydro Electric Transmissions
SLA	Special Landscape Area. Landscapes designated by Local Authorities which are considered to be of regional / local importance for their scenic qualities.
SM	Scheduled Monument
SNH	Scottish Natural Heritage (NatureScot is the operating name of Scottish Natural Heritage)
SOAEL	Significant observable adverse effect level
SOK	Sessile oak
SOTE	Species on the Edge
SP	Scots pine
SPA	Special Protection Area. – designated under Directive 2009/147/EC on the Conservation of Wild Birds (the Birds Directive) to protect important bird habitats.
SPP	Species Protection Plan
SQE	Suitably Qualified Ecologist
SQO	Suitably Qualified Ornithologist
SRSG	Scottish Raptor Study Group
SS	Sitka spruce
SSEN Transmission	Scottish and Southern Electricity Networks Transmission, who own, operate and develop the high voltage electricity transmission system in the north of Scotland and remote islands
SSSI	Site of Special Scientific Interest. Areas of national importance. The aim of the SSSI network is to maintain an adequate representation of all natural and semi-natural habitats and native species across Britain.
Study Area	A defined area which marks the extents of the region being considered within the assessment.
SUDS	Sustainable Drainage Systems
SYC	Sycamore
TA	Transport Assessment
TAN	Technical Advice Note
THC	The Highland Council
TS	Transport Scotland
UGC	Underground cable
UKCP18	UK Climate Projections
UKFS	UK Forestry Standard
UKHab	UK Habitat Classification
VP	Viewpoint
WCA	Wildlife and Countryside Act
WEBS	Wetland Bird Survey

Abbreviation	Definition
WFD	Water Framework Directive
WL	Willow
WPA	Wildcat Protected Area
WQFMP	Water Quality and Fish Monitoring Plan
ZTV	Zone of Theoretical Visibility. The computer-generated theoretical visibility of an object in the landscape

PREFACE

Scottish Hydro Electric Transmission plc ("the Applicant"), operating and known as Scottish and Southern Electricity Networks Transmission ("SSEN Transmission"), is applying for consent under section 37 of the Electricity Act 1989² to construct and operate a new double circuit steel structure 400 kilovolt (kV) overhead line (OHL) to connect into new substation sites at Beauly, New Deer and Peterhead. The Proposed Development also includes the realignment of a section of the existing 275 kV OHL south of Ferness. The project is referred to as the Beauly to Blackhillock to New Deer to Peterhead 400 kV OHL Project ('the Proposed Development').

In addition, the application also seeks consent under section 37 of the 1989 Act for an alternative alignment ('the Kellas Alternative Alignment'). In this particular location the alignment of the Proposed Development passes through an area which is within the application boundary for the proposed Kellas Drum Wind Farm, for which an application for consent under section 36 of the 1989 Act has been submitted to the Scottish Government (application reference ECU00005054). If the windfarm application were to be consented³, then the Kellas Alternative Alignment, which passes to the north of the proposed windfarm, would be constructed.

The Applicant is also seeking deemed planning permission under section 57(2) of the Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997⁴ for the construction and operation of the OHL and carrying out of ancillary works. These ancillary works will include the removal of the existing 132 kV OHL from Beauly to Knocknagael substations; installation of temporary and permanent access tracks; and tree and vegetation clearance.

This Environmental Impact Assessment Report (EIA Report) is submitted with the application in accordance with The Electricity Works (Environmental Impact Assessment) (Scotland) Regulations 2017 (the '2017 Regulations')⁵.

The EIA Report contains the following volumes:

- Contents, Abbreviations and Preface;
- Volume 1: Non-Technical Summary;
- Volume 2: Main Report;
- Volume 3: Figures;
- Volume 4: Visualisations; and
- Volume 5: Appendices.

In addition to the above, the application is accompanied by a Planning Statement, Socio-Economic Report, Pre-Application Consultation Report, Habitats Regulation Appraisal (HRA), Aviation Risk Assessment Report and Electric and Magnetic Fields (EMF) Report.

Notice of the section 37 application, including a hard copy of this EIA Report and associated documents and figures, will be available for viewing at the public locations listed in **Table 1** during normal opening hours.

Table 1: Viewing Locations

Location	Opening Hours	Address
Kiltarlity Post Office	Monday to Friday: 8 am to 4.30 pm Saturday: 8 am to 2.30 pm Sunday: 8.30 am to 12.30 pm	Kiltarlity Post Office Allarburn Place Kiltarlity IV4 7HG
Inverness Library	Monday to Wednesday: 9 am to 6.30 pm Thursday: 9 am to 7 pm	Inverness Library Farraline Park

² UK Government (1989). Electricity Act 1989. Available at: <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1989/29/contents>

³ There may be other circumstances associated with the status of the application for consent of the proposed Kellas Drum Wind Farm where the Kellas Alternative Alignment would be constructed.

⁴ UK Government (1997). Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997. Available at: <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1997/8/contents>

⁵ UK Government (2017). Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017. Available at: <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2017/571/contents>

Location	Opening Hours	Address
	Friday: 9 am to 6.30 pm Saturday: 9 am to 5 pm Sunday: Closed	Inverness IV1 1NH
Nairn Library	Monday: 9.30 am to 5.30 pm Tuesday: 9.30 am to 5.30 pm Wednesday: 9.30 am to 2 pm Thursday: 9.30 am to 7 pm Friday: 9.30 am to 5.30 pm Saturday: 10 am to 2 pm Sunday: Closed	Nairn Library 68 High Street Nairn IV12 4AU
Forres House Community Centre	Monday to Friday: 9 am to 10 pm Saturday: 9 am to 3 pm Sunday: Closed	Forres House Community Centre High Street Forres IV36 1BU
Elgin Library	Monday to Thursday: 10 am to 8 pm Friday: 10 am to 5 pm Saturday: 10 am to 4 pm Sunday: Closed	Elgin Library Cooper Park Elgin IV30 1HS
Linden Centre, Huntly	Weeks commencing Monday 13 th and Monday 20 th October: Monday: Closed Tuesday to Thursday: 9 am to 5 pm Friday: Closed Saturday and Sunday: Closed	Linden Centre Castle Street Huntly AB54 4SE
Linden Centre, Huntly	Weeks commencing Monday 28 th October onwards: Monday: 9 am to 5 pm Tuesday: 9 am to 8 pm Wednesday: 9 am to 9 pm Thursday: 9 am to 6.30 pm Friday: 9 am to 12 noon and 3 pm to 5.30 pm Saturday and Sunday: Closed	Linden Centre Castle Street Huntly AB54 4SE
Turriff Library	Monday: 10 am to 6 pm Tuesday: Closed Wednesday: 9.30 am to 1.30 pm Thursday: Closed Friday: 9 am to 5 pm Saturday and Sunday: Closed	Turriff Library Grange Villa The Square Turriff AB53 4AE
Mintlaw Library	Monday: Closed Tuesday: 9.30 am to 5 pm Wednesday: 11.30 am to 7 pm Thursday: Closed Friday: 9.30 am to 4.30 pm Saturday: 9.30 am to 12.30 pm Sunday: Closed	Mintlaw Library MACBI Community Hub Newlands Road Mintlaw Peterhead AB42 5GP
Buchan House Peterhead	Monday to Friday: 8.45 am to 5 pm (closed between 12.30 pm and 1.30 pm) Saturday and Sunday: Closed	Buchan House St Peter Street Peterhead AB42 1QF

The Non-Technical Summary (NTS) will also be available for viewing at the public location detailed in **Table 2** during normal opening hours.

Table 2: NTS Viewing Location

Location	Opening Hours	Address
Keith Library	Monday: 12 pm to 4 pm Tuesday: 10 am to 7 pm Wednesday: Closed Thursday: 10 am to 7 pm Friday: 10 am to 4 pm Saturday: 10 am to 12 pm Sunday: Closed	Keith Library 18 Union Street Keith AB55 5DP

The EIA Report and supporting documents can also be viewed via the ECU's website: www.energyconsents.scot

Electronic versions of the application, including this EIA Report and supporting documents, are available to download from SSEN Transmission's project website at:

<https://www.ssen-transmission.co.uk/projects/project-map/beauly-blackhillock-new-deer-peterhead-400kv/>

A hard copy of the Non-Technical Summary can be requested free of charge. A hard copy of the EIAR (Volume 1-5 listed above) is available for £1,000, or free of charge on a USB drive. For details or to request a copy, contact:

BBNP Community Liaison Manager
SSEN Transmission
10 Henderson Road
Inverness
IV1 1SN

Or

Email: bbnp@sse.com

Any representations in respect of the application may be submitted via the Energy Consents Unit website at www.energyconsents.scot/Register.aspx; by email to The Scottish Government, Energy Consents Unit mailbox at representations@gov.scot or by post, to The Scottish Government, Energy Consents Unit, 4th Floor, 5 Atlantic Quay, 150 Broomielaw, Glasgow, G2 8LU, identifying the proposal and specifying the grounds of representation.

Written or emailed representations should be dated, clearly stating the name of the project (in block capitals), full return email and postal address of those making representations. Only representations sent by email to representations@gov.scot will receive acknowledgement.

The Applicant will advertise the submission of the section 37 application in the following newspapers:

- Press and Journal
- Edinburgh Gazette

The advert will state the deadline for submitting representations to Scottish Ministers.